

Governant

Metropolitan Community Church

invites you to the celebration of our

15th Anniversary

and the dedication of our newly-acquired

Sanctuary

at 5117 First Avenue North

Birmingham, Alabama

Sunday, February 18, 1996

at 11 o'clock in the morning

Special Guest Speaker:

Rev. Elder Troy Perry

*Founder of the Universal Fellowship of
Metropolitan Community Churches*



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FORGING NEW ALLIANCES



FORGING NEW ALLIANCES

*15th Anniversary Celebration
& Building Dedication*

February 16-18, 1996





Covenant Metropolitan Community Church

5117 First Avenue North, Birmingham
599-3363

Rev. Marge Ragona
Pastor

Dr. Lee Rahe
Worship Coordinator, Tuscaloosa

IN CLERGY FORMATION
Andy Mullins (Atlanta), Greg Bullard (Memphis),
Richard Barham, John Foust, and Dr. Lee Rahe

DEACONS
Kay H., Shirley C., Cal M., Cliff T., Mark B., Eddie M., John F., Peg S., and Dennis L.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Mark M., Allan F., William B., Nancy U., and Shannon O.

MUSIC COMMITTEE
Mark C., Debbie T., Kathy M., Stevie H., and Barry N.

ANNIVERSARY ARTWORK
Tammy Webb

PROGRAM DESIGN
Mark Moore

February 16-18, 1996

Friday

Concert

Carolyn Marshall

7 p.m.

A classically-trained soprano, Carolyn Marshall brings her ministry to Covenant for the first time.

Saturday

High Tea with Troy

2-4 p.m.

Book signing with author, gay activist and UFMCC founder, Rev. Elder Troy Perry. Refreshments available.

Dinner at the Redmont

7 p.m.

A savvy speaker, Rev. Elder Troy Perry is the keynote speaker. Atlanta's Gospel Girls will stop in, providing musical entertainment.

Sunday

Breakfast

8:30 a.m.

\$5 will cover the cost of Sunday morning breakfast as our Anniversary celebration moves to the final day.

11 a.m.

Worship

Rev. Elder Troy Perry will deliver the morning sermon. Rev. Jay Neely, GLAD District Coordinator joins us in dedicating our recently purchased worship facility.

3 p.m.

African American Composers Concert

John Marberry and Chris Griffin offer a concert of music by African American composers in commemoration of Black History Month.

7 p.m.

Evening Worship

Please join us again for evening worship, this week and every week.

15 Years & Growing

Flashback! Some 15 years ago a small group applied for 'mission' status with the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. In September 1981 Rev. David Kromer, Doyle Richmond and Juanita Eskew signed the incorporation papers.

A year later Mary Moore, commuting from Atlanta, came on board as pastoral leader.

During the first two years of our church history several laid a foundation of who we are today. Hard work, community action, dedication and Christian love were the tools used. The giving was up to \$502 a month by the end of 1982, quite a distance from today's budget of \$8,000.

The group was meeting at the Birmingham Gay Center, on a second floor porch that swayed with the spirit, leaned a little and shook a lot. The congregation went in debt for the first time, buying a piano. Attendance averaged 30 per service.

A two-story house on 4th Avenue looked just right for our move in 1983, and there were 46 people at that first service. The neighborhood, however, did not welcome us with open arms. Packing up the piano, the group met in a rental residential house on Crestline Road for a while before finally settling in under Robert Logan's Hair Salon on 8th Court South. During that time, "Covenant" was added to the church name, sometimes before the MCC and sometimes after. During all the moving, some fell by the wayside and in April 1984, attendance was at 22.

In the mid-80s, the church started the Community Assistance Fund, which provided clothing, food and monetary assistance. The piano was



finally paid for and another fund collection enabled the purchase of the first copier. Rev. Elder Troy Perry came to town on Aug. 2, 1985, to debut the film "God, Gays and the Gospel". The service was moved to the Holiday Inn and there

was a full house. Cliff M. started the first CMCC choir in the fall of 1985 and Mary Moore became District Coordinator. A June 1986 bylaw adoption officially changed the name to Covenant MCC.

Significant events always seemed to happen in bunches. The hair salon decided to remodel the space we were using so there were a few more fast address changes. We moved in November 1986, to the space under the After Dark bar (now Club 21), then in February 1987 to 2630 6th Avenue South. Sunday services had been at 3 p.m., 4 p.m., 5 p.m. or 6 p.m. At 6th Avenue we moved *and* changed worship times to 11 am. That was also when our UFMCC status changed from 'mission' to 'commissioned' church. And the pastoral leader of almost five years, Mary Moore, decided to move to other things. Dennis L. and Steve P. were listed as co-pastoral leaders.

With monthly income now above \$2,000, a pastoral search started. Rev. Jim Becker was called and started July 15, 1988. But in less than a year, he was removed from the pastorate. Cliff Morrison was appointed pastoral leader in September 1989. Although the membership sagged to 11 the following January, it tripled within 18 month.

The clown ministry was a big hit starting in the Fall of 1990. The practice of serving commun-

ion at the seats as well as at the altar started then, too. In February 1991, the 10th anniversary theme was "New Visions for a New Decade" and Mary Moore, Rev. Jay Neely and Rev. Christine Oscar were the special guests. A Sweetheart Ball followed the day's workshops and activities. Then in April, the gospel group, Heartsong, came to church and we added the evening worship service.

Late 1992 and early 1993, the paint store was becoming a tight fit for services. We started a building fund. For our 11th anniversary, the theme, "This Church is Moving Higher," proved true as we in fact moved to 3001 4th Avenue. Rev. Jimmy Brock and Rev. Christine Oscar were the special guests. There were 71 at that first service.

The Fall of 1992, the Board of Directors and Council of Ministries reorganized. The Council took responsibility for the program functions while the Board took charge of the finances and building. Another building fund campaign raised more savings. More concerts that Fall attracted record crowds. On Oct. 28, 1992, the Heartsong-Marsha Stevens concert showed us the seating capacity at Fourth Avenue was 150. The Delores Berry special Sunday and the choir concert in December also drew large crowds.

1993 started with a bang as the first month to ever exceed \$5,000 in monthly contributions. The 12th anniversary in February had a theme of "Building on a Dozen Years of Faith". There were 100 people at that morning service. Exceeding 100 at a service has now happened 30 times since then.

In April, CMCC hosted the Spring Conference of Gulf Lower Atlantic District (GLAD). That same month the membership record officially doubled the January 1990 figure of 33. The Aug. 15 service saw 105 people and another building caught our interest. Another building fund push raised some big bucks this time, but owners of the worship facility snubbed our efforts to purchase.

The 1994 anniversary theme was "Come On Home" with a special concert by Karen Ann Edwards. There were 110 attending, a regular service attendance record that has been broken 12 times since then. The membership hit 90 that month. Another Delores Berry concert attracted large crowds in May.

Negotiations were underway for a new worship space—great news that came at a time of sadness as newly-ordained Rev. Cliff Morrison died May 29. He had taken CMCC membership from 11 to 93 and two great meeting places. The first function at 5117 First Avenue North was Cliff's funeral. The first official service was on June 12.

In August 1994, the congregation elected Rev. Marge Ragona as pastor and the membership climbed to 103. She was installed in September. In the Fall, the first service at the Tuscaloosa Parish Extension was held with 31 in attendance. The Christmas concert by the choir on Dec. 18 raised the attendance record to 149. The Christmas Eve service was the largest ever with 83.

January 1995 featured the first monthly offering of more than \$7,000. While the Easter month services in April brought attendance to 966 and a record high giving record of \$7,897. The building came up for sale and the Board signed a purchase agreement in July. The Building Fund took another jump. Late in the year, a bank approved financing, the congregation approved the purchase and the all-time record attendance was broken with 151 present at the choral drama on Dec. 17.

So now in 1996 we come together with much to celebrate. Again, great things come in bunches as this anniversary weekend coincides with our building dedication, is highlighted by the participation of our denomination's founder Rev. Elder Troy Perry, and as we continue our mission as a Christian church, to minister and share God's love.

Allan Francis

Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry

He too had been taught that you couldn't be a Christian and a gay person too. But one day, Rev. Elder Troy Perry says, God spoke to him. According to Troy, God said, "Don't tell me what I can do. I love you, Troy, and I don't have any stepsons or stepdaughters. Reread my Word." Troy did just that.

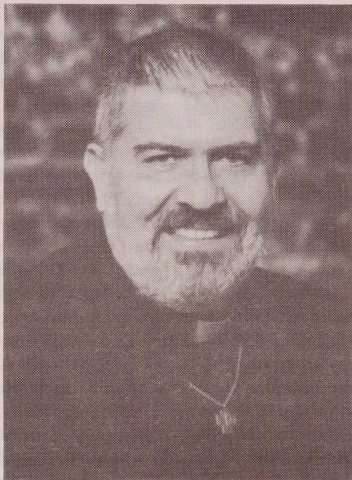
Following that re-reading, Troy founded what was to become the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, a denomination which has grown to more than 370 study groups, missions and churches in 19 countries.

The Fellowship was the first church denomination to recognize the necessity of ministering to the needs of gays and lesbians, a ministry Troy never received in his own church background.

When Troy was licensed at 15 as a Baptist minister he began wrestling with his burgeoning sexuality. Like many gay youths, he felt as if only he had these particular feelings.

Troy later married, had two children, and moved first to Illinois and then to California. In California, Troy pastored the Church of God of Prophecy in Santa Ana. And it was also there that his coming out process began, leading to a separation from his wife and eventual divorce.

It was upon his return to Los Angeles. after a



brief stint in the army that Troy held the first MCC worship service in his living room.

As the church denomination grew, Troy found himself becoming a national civil rights leader. Groups like the American Civil Liberties union Lesbian and Gay Rights Chapter, the Gay press Association and the American Federation of Veterans have honored him.

Troy's books, *The Lord Is My Shepherd and Knows I'm Gay*, *Don't be Afraid Anymore* and *Profiles in Gay and Lesbian*

Courage, detail his own spiritual struggles and victories and the political battles fought by a host of our world's gay and lesbian leaders.

"...the husky Pentecostal preacher," says Laud Humphreys in his work *Out of the Closets: The Sociology of Homosexual Liberation*, "evidences more charismatic features than any other leader produced during the homophile movement's first 20 years...In theology he is 'fundamentalist', in attire a Catholic, but by conviction, Troy Perry is also a political activist, manifesting both the street skills and the special innovative and verbal skills of the gay subculture."

Today, thanks to that charismatic leader that Humphreys describes, thousands of people share the message of God's inclusive love, saying, "we're not afraid anymore."

Carolyn Marshall

"When I came to terms with my sexuality I thought my dreams to be a Musical Evangelist were unrealistic." Then someone invited Carolyn Marshall to an MCC service. Carolyn went on to become a founding member of Christ Covenant MCC in Stone Mountain, Ga., and to serve as treasurer on the Board of Directors.

Now she begins a ministry of music singing Christian music of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community through concerts, special events and worship services. At Christ Covenant she involves herself in the music ministry under the direction of Rev. Glenna Shepherd.

In addition to church concerts, Carolyn has sung at two UFMCC General Conferences, sev-

eral District Conferences and many Atlanta Pride Weekend events.

"I've always known that God has called me to sing. In fact I can't remember a time in my life that I wasn't singing in church," Carolyn says. She studied voice at Mercer University, Atlanta, has been involved with church music since grade school and had formal training in solo, small ensemble and choral work.

"It is vital," Carolyn adds, "that we communicate to the gay, lesbian, and bisexual community what the Bible really says about homosexuality and that there is a place where we are not only allowed to worship, but which embraces our diversity."

John Marberry and Chris Griffin

John Marberry is a graduate of Birmingham-Southern College and Southern Methodist University, and has done graduate study at Northwestern University (Evanston, Ill.). He has served as music teacher at Judson College, Marion Military Institute, and Ramsay Alternative High School.

His organist positions have included The Lutheran Church of Vestavia Hills, Pilgrim Lutheran Church, Temple Emanu-el, the Cathedral of St. Paul, and St. Mark's Catholic Church. Last year in celebration of African-American Heri-

tage Month he presented *Music by Black Composers* for Ramsay Alternative High School at the Cathedral of St. Paul, and on Sunday, Feb. 25 he will present the program at St. Joseph Proto-Cathedral in Bardstown, Ky.

Chris Griffin is a native of Tuscaloosa and a graduate of the Alabama School of Fine Arts and the University of Alabama. He is presently Music Director/Organist at The Lutheran Church of Vestavia Hills and a member of the Dip Tones, an *a capella* vocal group. He has also served as tenor soloist at the Cathedral of St. Paul.

F O R G I N G N E W A L L I A N C E S

Sunday, February 18, 1996 • 11 a.m.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Steve Parker

▲ CALL TO WORSHIP

John Foust

One God reigns! Let all the earth quake!

Many God is great in Zion and is exalted over all the peoples.

One Let us praise God's great and awesome Name!

Many Holy is our God. Alleluia!

OPENING PRAYER

Cal McCluskey

▲ HYMN OF PRAISE

Printed

Joyful People Come and Worship

INTRODUCTION OF DIGNITARIES

DEDICATION OF THE BUILDING

ANTHEM

The Choir

We Worship As One (Albrecht/Althouse)

OUR GIFTS TO GOD

Our Prayer Offerings

Randall

Together, let us pray for:

the people of this congregation

those who suffer and those in trouble

the concerns of our community

the world, its peoples, and its leaders

the church universal—its leaders, its members and its mission

Our Tithes and Gifts

Mark Moore

Offertory

The Choir

This Is the Day (Beall/Carter)

▲ THE DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God all creatures here below.

O Praise God, Alleluia.

Praise God above ye heavenly host,

Praise Maker, Christ and holy Ghost.

O Praise God, O praise God. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

THE CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Rev. Marge Ragona

CHILDREN'S CHURCH (First Floor, Fellowship Hall)

READINGS FROM THE SCRIPTURES

Exodus 24: 12-18

2 Peter 1:16-21

▲ Matthew 17:19 (Please rise as you are able)

SPECIAL MUSIC

The Choir

We Thank You, God (Price/Besig)

1 5 T H A N N I V E R S A R Y

SERMON

Rev. Elder Troy Perry

THE COLLECT CALL TO CONFESSION

Rev. Ragona

God, we know that our hope rests on the foundation of Jesus Christ, and that you have built us as your temple. Often we rely too much on our own understanding. We seek to follow our own way rather than abiding in your will. We let the world's wisdom, and not your righteousness, guide our eyes and ears and hands. Empower us to be the ones who call the prisoners to freedom, to be the ones who call those in darkness into the light. Hear now our silent confessions...

CHRIST'S PRAYER "Our Creator, which art in heaven..."

WORDS OF ASSURANCE AND PARDON

Our God sets captives free and we are free in God's sight. Our God brings new life to the desperate and allows us to face each new day with courage. Our lives can be transformed in hope, this is the promise of God. Alleluia!

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

REV. MARGE RAGONA AND REV. JAY NEELY

Celebrant God be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People We lift them up to God.

Celebrant Let us give thanks to God.

People It is right to give God thanks and praise

Celebrant It is right to give you thanks and praise for you alone are God living and true.

INVITATION TO HOLY COMMUNION

Words of Institution

THE MYSTERY OF OUR FAITH

Christ has died

Christ is risen

Christ will come again.

SHARING OF THE SACRAMENT

Note: For today communion is served only at the altar; please follow the usher's instructions.

Communion is served with nonalcoholic grape juice.

COMMUNION ANTHEM

The Choir

Come, Let Us Eat (Kwillia/Carter)

COMMUNION HYMN

495

It Is Well With My Soul

THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

▲ THE HYMN OF CELEBRATION

Printed

We Love Your Realm, O God

▲ OUR FAMILYSHIP CIRCLE & BENEDICTION

One God go with you

Many And also with you.

CHORAL BENEDICTION

The Choir

Antiphonal Alleluia (Schram)

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

Sunday, February 18, 1996 • 3 p.m.

JOHN MARBERY, *Organist and Pianist*



CHRIS GRIFFIN, *Tenor*

IN A PROGRAM OF

Music by African American Composers

Eugene Hancock

Go Tell It On The Mountain
My Lord, What a Morning

Florence Beatrice Price

Adoration

William Grant Still

Reverie

Eugene Hancock

We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder

Mr. Marberry, Organ

Frederick Hall

Dawn

Cecil Cohen

Epitaph for a Poet

John W. Work, Jr.

Dusk at Sea

Florence Beatrice Price

Night

Out of the South Blew a Wind

Mr. Griffin, Tenor

Mr. Marberry, Piano

William Grant Still

Swanee River

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child
My Lord Delivered Daniel

Mr. Marberry, Piano

John Rosamond Johnson

Crucifixion

John W. Work, Jr.

This Little Light of Mine

Henry Thacker Burleigh

Motherless Child

Were You There?

Hall Johnson

Ride On, King Jesus

Mr. Griffin, Tenor

Mr. Marberry, Piano

Diamond Memorials



Wes Fortner

In memory of my mother Ouida Fortner Wyatt and my aunt Ruth Sartin.

Diamond Patrons



Steve Parker

Dale B. and Jerry W.

Golden Temple

Larry Cooper

William Berry

Dorothy Swims

Allan Francis

Announcements

Sunday

Inquirer's Class	9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship and Children's Church	11 a.m.
Evening Worship and Praise Service	7 p.m.

Tuesday

Choir Praise	6:30 p.m.
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Wednesday

Ash Wednesday Service	7 p.m.
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Thursday

Bible Study (Maps available in the foyer)	7 p.m.
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Monday, Feb. 19

7 p.m.

Church History Class

Tuesday, Feb. 20

7 p.m.

Deacon Training

Wednesday, Feb. 21

7 p.m.

Ash Wednesday Service.

We will have the imposition of ashes during worship. Come and begin Lent in this meaningful way.

SPECIAL THANKS

We thank all the people who have made this weekend so very special. Thanks to Carolyn Marshall for our concert Friday night; to the SHOE Committee for High Tea with Troy and the excellent Breakfast Sunday morning; to the Gospel Girls and everyone who helped with the dinner Saturday night; to the ticket and advertisement sales force, T-shirt designer and program advertisers; to Phillip B., Shannon O., and the deacons for their help all weekend; and to many, many more who took part in the planning and execution of this weekend. It has been a labor of love and we appreciate all of you. Special thanks to Steve Parker for coordinating the weekend.

VERY SPECIAL THANKS

We thank the charter members of Covenant MCC who are still with us and who contribute in many ways even after all these years. You started a good thing and we love you for it.

Tammy L. Webb
205-841-0564

Graphic Artists

Shirley W. Cooper
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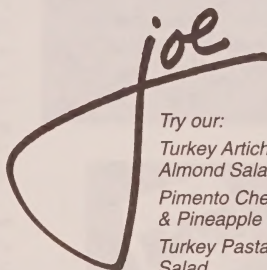
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Mardi Gras
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Alabama's

Gay

&

Lesbian

News

Source.

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for

another

year

of

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and

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to

the

Birmingham

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FORGING NEW ALLIANCES

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YOU ARE MISSED
BY ALL WHO KNEW YOU...



MARK BROWN



**WE JOIN THE GAY AND LESBIAN
COMMUNITY IN CONGRATULATING
COVENANT MCC
ON THEIR 15TH ANNIVERSARY AND
BUILDING DEDICATION.**

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Tuscaloosa



*As they went from town to town,
they delivered to them for
observance the decisions that had
been reached by the apostles and the
elders ... So the churches were
strengthened in faith and
increased in numbers daily.*

Acts 16: 4-5

The members and friends of the
Tuscaloosa Parish Extension wish to
congratulate Covenant MCC on its 15th
anniversary and the dedication of its
new sanctuary.

Thank God for the work being done all
over the world in the name of the
Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan
Community Churches.

The Tuscaloosa Parish Extension meets every Sunday
at 4 p.m. at the Tuscaloosa Holiday Inn. For more
information, call (205) 345-2044



744 29th Street South
Birmingham, Alabama

(205) 323-7082

Thank You
CMCC

Stevie



In Loving Memory

Scott Beach
Larry Galloway
Harold Glass
Stan Lee
Cliff Morrison
David Potter
Rob Roberts
Steve Vaccarella
Love, Phillip L.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE

Past, Present and Future

MEMBERS OF

COVENANT METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

ON THIS OUR

15th Anniversary

BEST WISHES FOR MANY MORE YEARS TOGETHER

REV. MARGE RAGONA AND SHIRLEY LAMBERT

**GAY AND
LESBIAN
ALLIANCE
OF ALABAMA**

GALAA



Congratulates

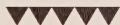
***Covenant Metropolitan
Community Church***

*for fifteen years of service and the
dedication of your beautiful new
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meeting every second and fourth Friday
in the Fellowship Hall.



For more information about GALAA and other
worthwhile projects, please call 205-GALAA86.

GALAA, P.O.Box 36784, Birmingham 35236



Those that wait upon our God, shall renew their strength.

- They shall mount up on wings as eagles, they shall run and not grow weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah 40:31



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Flashback! Some 15 years ago a small group applied for 'mission' status with the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. In September 1981 Rev David Kr^gmer, Doyle Richmond and Juanita Eskew signed the incorporation papers. And a year later Mary Moore, commuting from Atlanta, came on board as Pastoral Leader.

During the first two years of our church history several laid a foundation of who we are today. Hard work, community action, dedication and Christian love were the tools used. The giving was up to \$502 a month by the end of 1982, quite a distance from today's budget of \$8000. The group was meeting at the Birmingham Gay Center, on a second floor porch that swayed with the spirit, leaned a little and shook. ^{a lot} The congregation went in debt for the first time, buying a piano. And attendance averaged 25-30 per service.

The May day in 1983 was a big move. A two-story house on 4th Avenue looked just right, and there were 46 people at that first service. Twenty-nine of the then 40 members signed the application. Still close by among the signers are Dennis L., Allan F., William B., Troy J. and Danny G. Several are inactive but still around town but most are not in the area. At least one is deceased.

~~But~~ the neighborhood did not welcome us with open arms. Packing up the piano, the group met in a rental residential house on Crestline Road for a while before finally settling in under Robert Logan's

Hair Salon on 8th Court South. During that time, "Covenant" was added to the church name, sometimes before the MCC and sometimes after. During all the moving, some fell by the wayside and in April 1984, attendance was at 22.

In the mid-80s, the church started the Community Assistance Fund. It provided clothing, furniture, food and monetary assistance. The piano was finally paid for and then another fund collection enabled the purchase of the first copier. Rev. Elder Troy Perry came to town on Aug. 2, 1985, to debut the film "God, Gays and the Gospel". The service was moved to the Holiday Inn and there was a full house. Cliff M. started the first CMCC choir in the fall of 1985 and Mary Moore became District Coordinator. The present bylaws were adopted in June of 1986 which officially changed the name to Covenant MCC.

Significant events always seemed to happen in bunches (like fruits?). The hair salon decided to remodel the space we were using so there were a few more fast address changes. Moving in November 1986, to the space under the After Dark bar (now Club 21) which entered from 2nd Avenue North, then in February 1987, to 2630 6th Avenue South. The services had always been ~~at~~ ^{at} 3 pm, 4 pm, 5 pm or 6 pm on Sundays. At 6th Avenue we moved ~~and~~ ^{and} changed worship times to 11:00 am. That was also when our UFMCC status changed from 'mission' to 'commissioned' church. And the pastoral leader of almost five years, Mary Moore, decided to move to other things. Dennis L and Steve P. were listed at co-pastoral leaders.

With monthly income now above \$2000, a pastoral search started. Rev. Jim Becker was called and started July 15, 1988. But in less than a year, he was removed from the pastorate. Cliff Morrison



was appointed pastoral leader in September 1989. Although the membership sagged to 11 the following January, it tripled within 18 months.

The clown ministry was a big hit starting in the Fall of 1990. The practice of serving communion at the seats as well as at the altar started then, too. In February 1991, the tenth anniversary theme was "New Visions for a New Decade" and Mary Moore, Rev. Jay Neely and Rev. Christine Oscar were the special guests. After a day of workshops there was a Sweetheart Ball. Then in April, the gospel group, Heartsong, came to church and the evening worship service was added.

Late 1992 and early 1993, the services were packing the paint store. A building fund effort started. The eleventh anniversary theme in February, 1992, was "This Church is Moving Higher" as we in fact moved to 3001 4th Avenue. Rev. Jimmy Brock and Rev. Christine Oscar were the

special guests. There were 71 at that first service. Membership and attendance gathered steam from there as the Good Friday drama in April attracted 90 and in July, 1992, the fifty membership plateau was broken.

The Fall of 1992, the Board of Directors and Council of Ministries reorganized. The Council took responsibility for the program functions while the Board took charge of the finances and building. Another building fund campaign raised more savings. More concerts that Fall attracted record crowds. On Oct. 28, 1992, the Heartsong-Marsha Stevens concert showed us the seating capacity at Fourth Avenue was 150. The Delores Berry special Sunday and the choir concert in December also drew large crowds.

1993 started with a bang as the first month to ever exceed \$5000 in monthly contributions. The 12th anniversary in February had a theme of

"Building on a Dozen Years of Faith". There were 100 people at that morning service. Exceeding 100 at a service has now happened 30 times since then. In April, CMCC hosted the Spring Conference of Gulf Lower Atlantic District at the University Inn. That same month the membership record officially doubled the January 1990 figure of 33. The Aug. 15 service saw 105 people and another building tweaked our interest. Another building fund push raised some big bucks this time, but owners of the worship facility snubbed our efforts to purchase. In the meantime, the Articles of Incorporation were updated in case we needed them.

The 1994 anniversary theme was "Come On Home" with special concerts by Karen Ann Edwards. There were 110 attending, a regular service attendance record that has been broken 12 times since then. The membership hit 90 that month. Another Delores Berry concert attracted large crowds in May.

Negotiations were underway for a new worship space—great news that came at a time of sadness as newly ordained, Rev. Cliff Morrison died May 29. He had taken CMCC membership from 11 to 93 and two great meeting places. The first function at 5117 First Avenue North was Cliff's funeral. The first official service was on June 12.

In August 1994, the congregation elected Rev. Marge Ragona as pastor and the membership climbed to 103. She was installed in September. In the Fall, the first service at the Tuscaloosa Parish Extension was held with 31 people in attendance. The Christmas Concert by the Choir on December 18 ^{raised} ~~weakened~~ the attendance record with 149. The Christmas Eve service was the largest ever with 83.

Finally, 1995 has seen records come and go. The bang in January was the first ever monthly offering of more than \$7000. The Easter month services in April brought attendance to 966 and a

record high giving record of \$7897. The building came up for sale and the Board signed a purchase agreement in July. The Building Fund took another jump. Late in the year, the icing on that cake was approved financing from a bank, approval from the congregation then the all-time record attendance of 151 at the choral drama on December 17.

So now in 1996 we come together with much to celebrate. Again, great things come in bunches as the anniversary weekend coincides with our building dedication, and is highlighted by the participation of our denomination founder Rev. Elder Troy Perry. And we as a congregation continue our mission as a Christian church, to minister and share God's love.

Allan Francis

denominational

February 16-18, 1996

Friday

Concert

Carolyn Marshall

7 p.m.

A classically-trained soprano, Carolyn Marshall brings her ministry to Covenant for the first time.

Saturday

High Tea with Troy

2-4 p.m.

Book signing with author, gay activist and UFMCC founder, Rev. Elder Troy Perry.
Refreshments available.

Dinner at the Redmont

7 p.m.

A savvy speaker, Rev. Elder Troy Perry is the keynote speaker.
Atlanta's Gospel Girls will stop in, providing musical entertainment.

Sunday

Breakfast

8:30 a.m.

\$5 will cover the cost of Sunday morning breakfast
as our Anniversary celebration moves to the final day.

11 a.m.

Worship

Rev. Elder Troy Perry will deliver the morning sermon.
Rev. Jay Neely, GLAD District Coordinator joins us in dedicating
our recently purchased worship facility.

3 p.m.

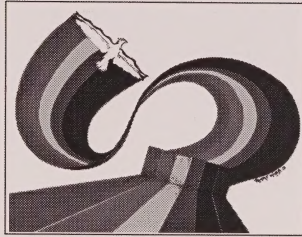
African American Composers Organ Concert

John Marberry and Chris Griffin offer a concert of music by African American composers
in commemoration of Black History Month.

7 p.m.

Evening Worship

Please join us again for evening worship,
this week and every week.



Those that wait upon our God, shall renew their strength.
They shall mount up on wings as eagles, they shall ~~walk~~ ^{fly} and not grow weary,
they shall ~~run~~ ^{dash} and not ~~fall~~ ^{faint}.
Isaiah 40:31

BOOK
HOCIA

Carolyn Marshall

John Marberry and Chris Griffen

Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry

He too had been taught that you couldn't be a Christian and a gay person too. But one day, Rev. Elder Troy Perry says, God spoke to him. According to Troy, God said, "Don't tell me what I can do. I love you, Troy, and I don't have any stepsons or stepdaughters. Reread my Word." Troy did just that.

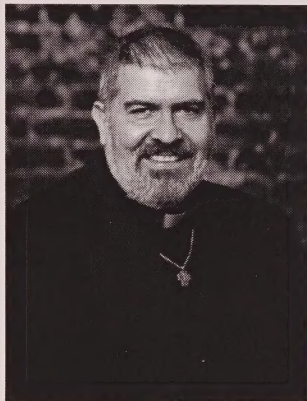
Following that rereading, Troy founded the denomination we know today as the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, which has grown to more than 370 study groups, missions and churches in 19 countries.

The Fellowship was the first church denomination to recognize the necessity of ministering to the needs of gays and lesbians. A ministry Troy never received in his own church background.

At 15 Troy was licensed as a Baptist minister while at the same time he found himself wrestling with his burgeoning sexuality. Like many gay youths, he felt as if only he had these particular feelings.

Troy later married, and his growing family moved first to Illinois and then to California. In California, Troy pastored the Church of God of Prophecy in Santa Ana. And it was also there that his coming out process began, leading to a separation from his wife and eventual divorce.

It was upon his return to Los Angeles after a brief stint in the army that Troy held the first worship service for MCC in his living room.



As the church denomination grew, Troy found himself becoming a national civil rights leader. Groups like the American Civil Liberties Union Lesbian and Gay Rights Chapter, the Gay Press Association and the American Federation of Veterans have honored him. He even had opportunity to discuss with former President Jimmy Carter the spectrum of gay and lesbian civil rights issues.

The details of his own spiritual struggles and victories and the political battles fought by a host of our world's gay and lesbian leaders can be read in books Troy has written. He has contributed to several works and authored *The Lord Is My Shepherd* and *Knows I'm Gay, Don't Be Afraid Any More* and *Profiles in Gay and Lesbian Courage*.

Today, thanks to Troy, thousands of people share the message of God's love for everyone, saying "we're not afraid anymore."

1 5 T H A N N I V E R S A R Y

F O R G I N G N E W A L L I A N C E S

Sunday, February 18, 1996 • 7 p.m.

1 5 T H A N N I V E R S A R Y

F O R G I N G N E W A L L I A N C E S

Sunday, February 18, 1996 • 3 p.m.

1 5 T H A N N I V E R S A R Y

SERMON

Rev. Elder Troy Perry

THE COLLECT CALL TO CONFESSION

Rev. Ragona

God, we know that our hope rests on the foundation of Jesus Christ, and that you have built us as your temple. Often we rely too much on our own understanding. We seek to follow our own way rather than adding in your will. We let the world's wisdom, and not your righteousness, guide our eyes and ears and hands. Empower us to be the ones who call the prisoners to freedom, to be the ones who call those in darkness into the light. Hear now our silent confessions...

CHRIST'S PRAYER "Our Creator, which art in heaven..."

WORDS OF ASSURANCE AND PARDON

Our God sets captives free and we are free in God's sight. Our God brings new life to the desperate and allows us to face each new day with courage. Our lives can be transformed in hope, this is the promise of God. Alleluia!

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Celebrant God be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People We lift them up to God.

Celebrant Let us give thanks to God.

People It is right to give God thanks and praise

Celebrant It is right to give you thanks and praise for you alone are God living and true.

REV NEE LY / REV RAGONA

INVITATION TO HOLY COMMUNION

Words of Institution

THE MYSTERY OF OUR FAITH

Christ has died

Christ is risen

Christ will come again.

altar

SHARING OF THE SACRAMENT

Note: For today communion is served only at the altar; please follow the usher's instructions.
Communion is served with nonalcoholic grape juice.

COMMUNION ANTHEM

Come, Let Us Eat (Kwillia/Carter)

The Choir

COMMUNION HYMN

It Is Well With My Soul

495

THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

▲ THE HYMN OF CELEBRATION

We Love Your Realm, O God

Printed

545

▲ OUR FAMILYSHIP CIRCLE & BENEDICTION

One God go with you

Many And also with you.

CHORAL BENEDICTION

Antiphonal Alleluia (Schram)

The Choir

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

Sunday, February 18, 1996 • 11 a.m.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Steve Parker

▲ CALL TO WORSHIP

John Foust

One God reigns! Let all the earth quake!
 Many **God is great in Zion and is exalted over all the peoples.**
 One Let us praise God's great and awesome Name!
 Many **Holy is our God. Alleluia!**

OPENING PRAYER

Cal McCluskey

▲ HYMN OF PRAISE

Printed

Joyful People Come and Worship

INTRODUCTION OF DIGNITARIES

DEDICATION OF THE BUILDING

ANTHEM

The Choir

We Worship As One (Albrecht/Althouse)

OUR GIFTS TO GOD

Our Prayer Offerings

Randall

Together, let us pray for:
 the people of this congregation
 those who suffer and those in trouble
 the concerns of our community
 the world, its peoples, and its leaders
 the church universal—its leaders, its members and its mission

Our Tithes and Gifts

Mark Moore

Offertory

The Choir

This Is the Day (Beall/Carter)

▲ THE DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
 Praise God all creatures here below.
 O Praise God, Alleluia.
 Praise God above ye heavenly host,
 Praise Maker, Christ and holy Ghost.
 O Praise God, O praise God. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

THE CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Rev. Marge Ragona

CHILDREN'S CHURCH (First Floor, Fellowship Hall)

READINGS FROM THE SCRIPTURES

Exodus 24: 12-18

2 Peter 1:16-21

▲ Matthew 17:19 (Please rise as you are able)

SPECIAL MUSIC

The Choir

We Thank You, God (Price/Besig)

Covenant Metropolitan Community Church
"Forging New Alliances"
Please share in our 15th Anniversary Crystal Celebration!

Fifteen years and growing! 1996 should prove to be an exciting year for us and your as we celebrate our 15th Anniversary. Join us during this spectacular weekend, Friday, February 16 through Saturday, February 18.

The weekend begins Friday with a **Concert** featuring classically trained soprano Carolyn Marshall.

Saturday's events will consist of a **High Tea with Rev. Troy Perry**, founder of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. We will offer his books for sale, which you may have autographed while sharing refreshments with Rev. Perry. Later, on Saturday evening, we will be having a **Banquet Dinner and Show** that will include a live performance by the Atlanta's *Gospel Girls* and guest speaker, *Rev. Troy Perry*.

We will complete this exciting weekend by **dedicating our NEWLY PURCHASED church building** with the help of Rev. Perry, and Rev. Jay Neilly, our district coordinator; and a performance by our very own Covenant MCC Choir. A **Breakfast** will be held at 9:00 a.m. at the church to give people the opportunity to continue fellowshiping with Rev. Perry and each other. At 3:00 p.m., we will have an **Organ Concert of Gospel Favorites** commemorating Black History Month and our regular **Evening Worship** at 7:00 p.m.

All people are invited to the events of the weekend, and we hope you will join us!! Tickets for the Banquet and the Breakfast may be purchased from Covenant MCC. The Banquet will be best dress to semi-formal. (Tuxedo or gowns optional.)

During this special weekend Covenant MCC will kick off a year-long celebration and new ministry – "Forging New Alliances". During the High Tea with Rev. Troy Perry, new T-shirts will be on sale to promote this exciting ministry to the community.

We also will be offering souvenir programs describing all of the weekend events and biographies of each of the major participants. The program will also include a list a Crystal Patrons, Diamond Patrons, and Diamond Memorials. These are names of people who have helped us conduct this weekend with their generous financial donations and the names of people who are remembered by our community friends. These programs will be free of charge to all!

To help Covenant MCC celebrate its Crystal Anniversary we would like to offer you the opportunity to place an advertisement in the weekend program. We will print 500 programs that will be distributed at every weekend event. For a small fee you can reach not only these 500 friends, but also reach their many friends in the community.

Please complete the order form included with this letter and return it, along with your camera ready art or detailed instructions and payment (Check or Money Order Please) to:

Elizabeth Ragona, Weekend Sales Coordinator
Covenant MCC
911 G Valley Avenue
Birmingham, AL 35209

No guarantee is made if cash is sent.
--

Orders must be received by January 26, 1996. If you have any question about your ad, please call Elizabeth at work (9-5, M-F) 323-1389 or at home (Leave a message if no answer) 854-6609. Thank you for your continued support and friendship over the years.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Ragona

Covenant Metropolitan Community Church

15th Anniversary Crystal Celebration

Program Advertisement Order Form

Advertisements

See Reverse for advertisement sizes.

Due to the printing deadline, we will not be able to let you proofread your ad or name. Please include clear and legible instructions.

PLEASE DO NOT ATTACH CAMERA READY ARTWORK WITH STAPLES OR PAPERCLIPS. TEARING MAY OCCUR.

All Ad Spaces Shown Full Size. Borders and Gutters will be added as necessary. Some resizing of your camera ready art may be necessary to fit in the space available.

If you would like your ad located on a specific page or grouped with another ad please let us know. If possible, we will accommodate all specific requests.

Patron Names

See Reverse to write patron or memorial names.

Advertisement and Patron Payment

Ad Size	Cost Per Ad	Quantity of Ads or Names	Cost Per Ad Types
Full Page	\$85.00	_____	_____
Half Page	\$45.00	_____	_____
1/4 Page	\$25.00	_____	_____
1/8 Page	\$15.00	_____	_____
Diamond Memorial	\$10.00	_____	_____
Diamond Patron	\$10.00	_____	_____
Crystal Patron	\$ 5.00	_____	_____

Total Cost _____

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Full Page

Half Page

1/8 Page

**1/4
Page**

1/8 Page

Patron Names

Crystal Patron Name: _____

Diamond Patron Name: _____

Diamond Memorial Name: _____

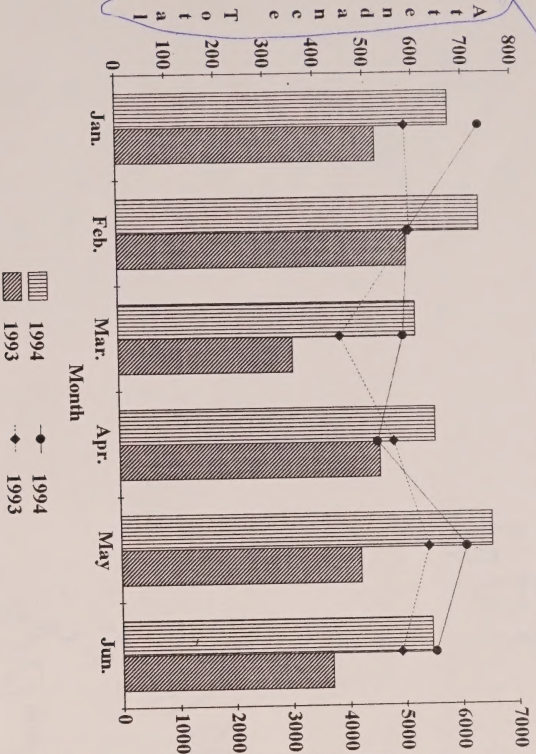
Please print clearly in upper and lower case letters. Attach additional names on a blank sheet of paper.

Cost of Patron or Memorial is per name or family to fit on one (1) line.

	Mid-Year Report			
	<u>This</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Last</u>	<u>Year</u>
	Attendance	Gen. Income	Attendance	Gen. Income
Jan.	672	6415	524	5105
Feb.	732	5138	584	5173
Mar.	600	5032	352	3909
Apr.	637	4549	525	4835
May	749	6102	483	5429
Jun.	626	5535	424	4918

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Mid-Year Report Attendance/Finances



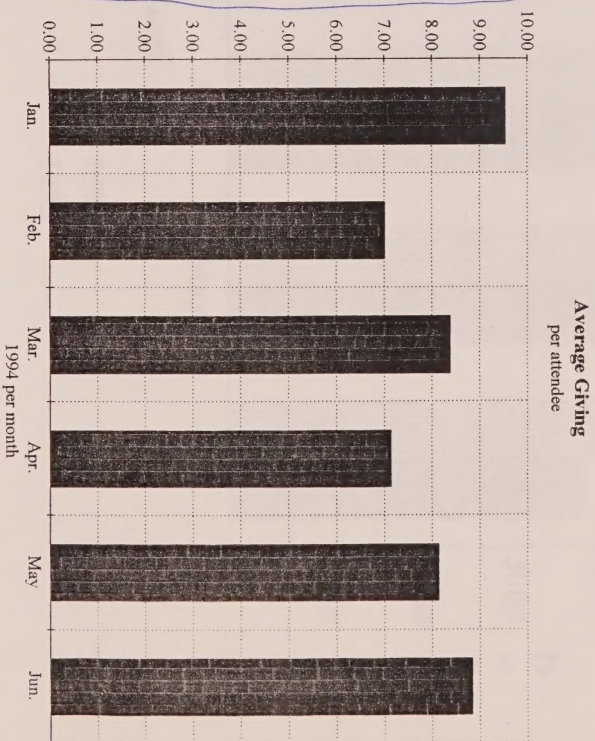
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60% reduction in cap.

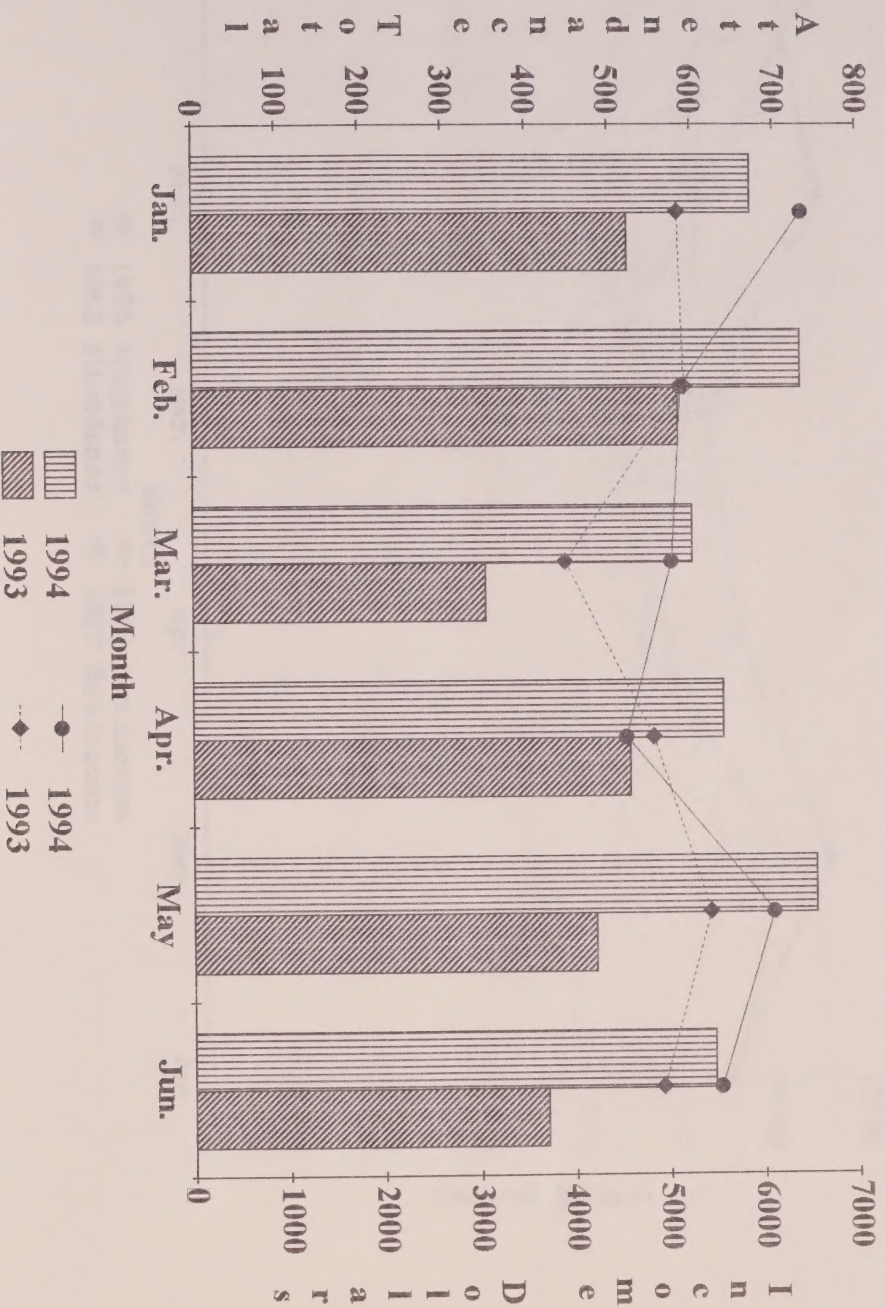
6000

Change to All Cap

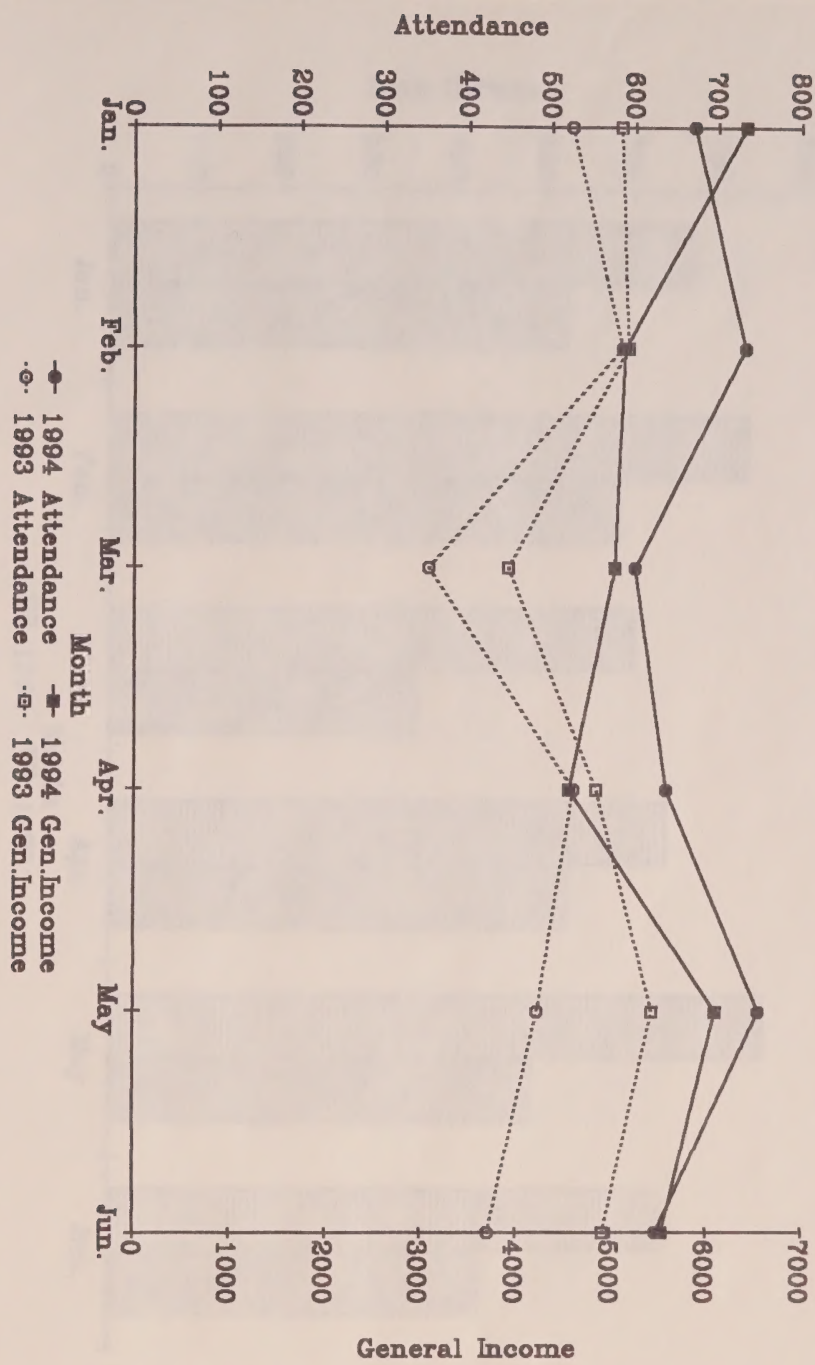
average per attendee



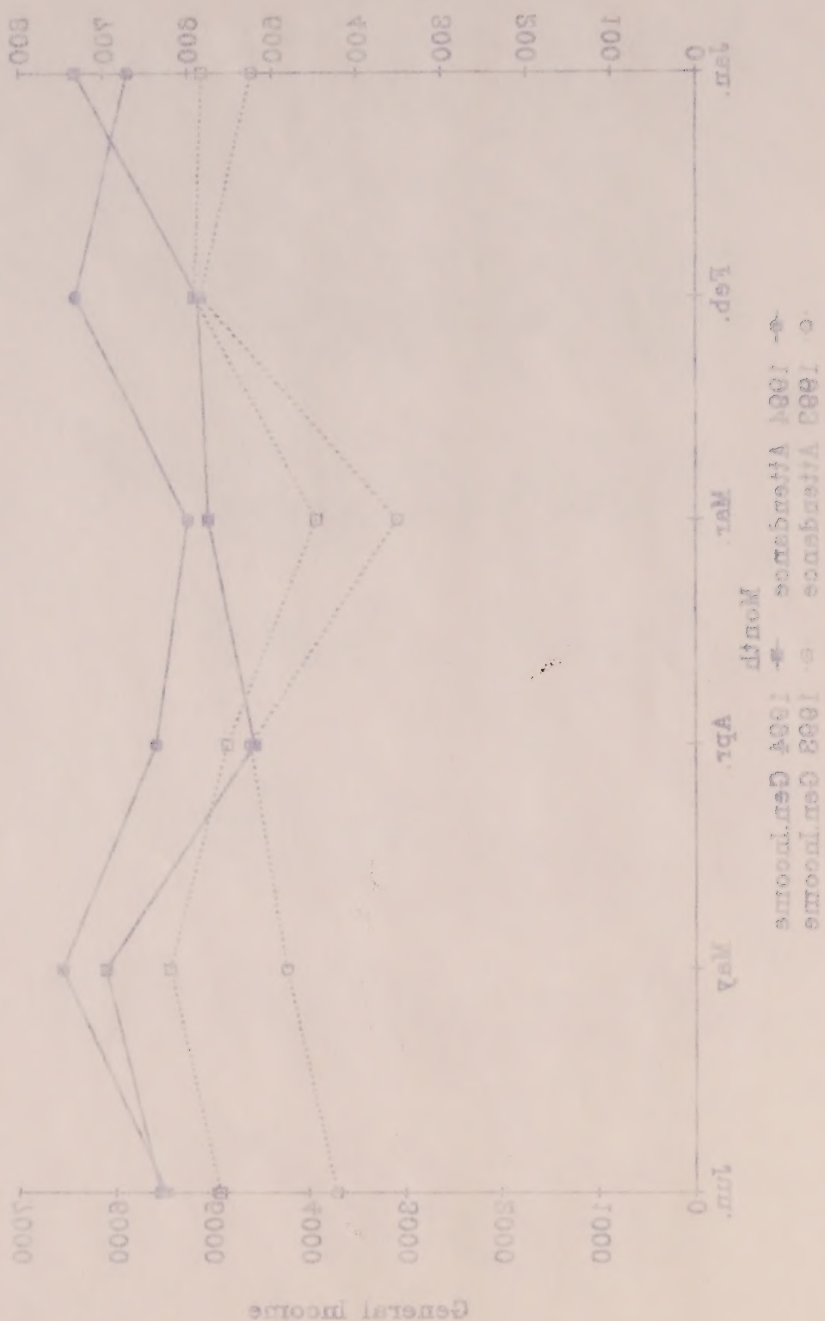
Mid-Year Report Attendance/Finances



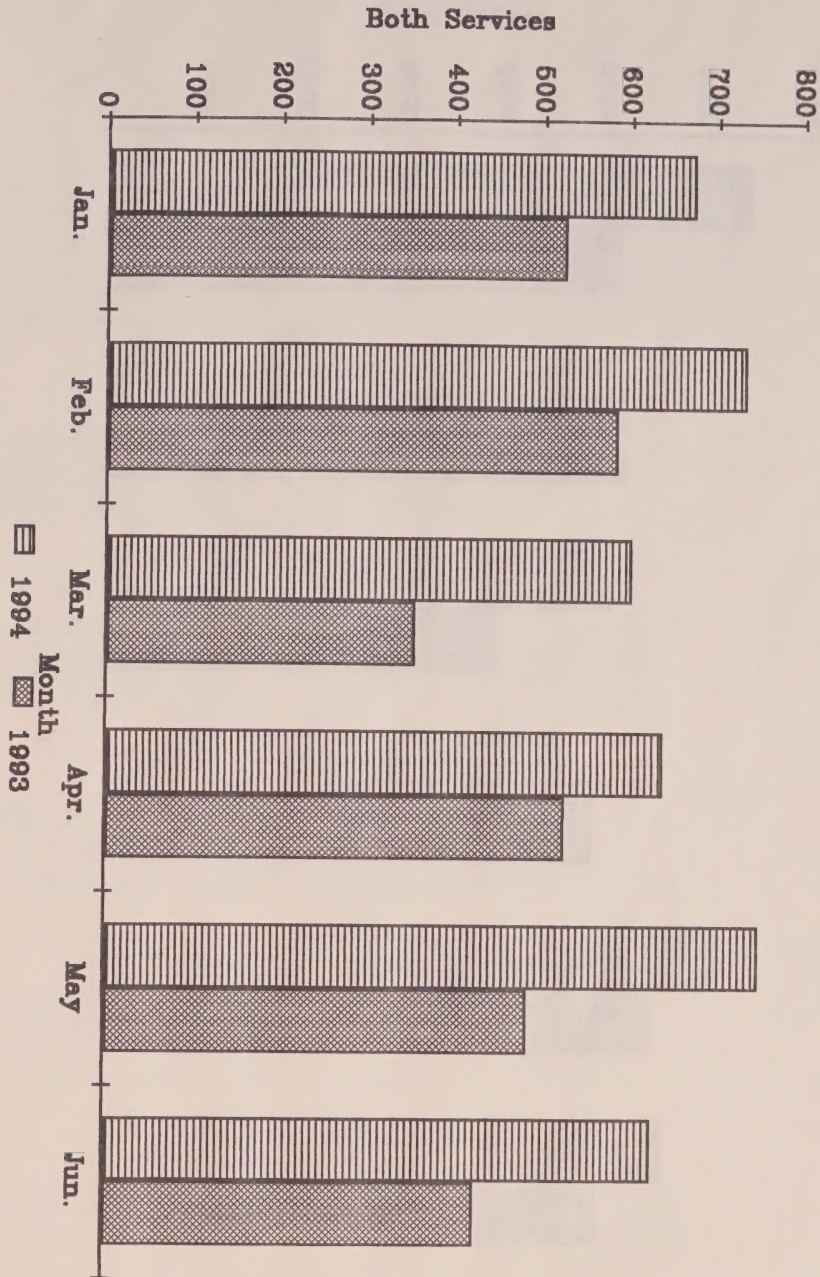
Mid-Year Report-1994 Attendance/Finances



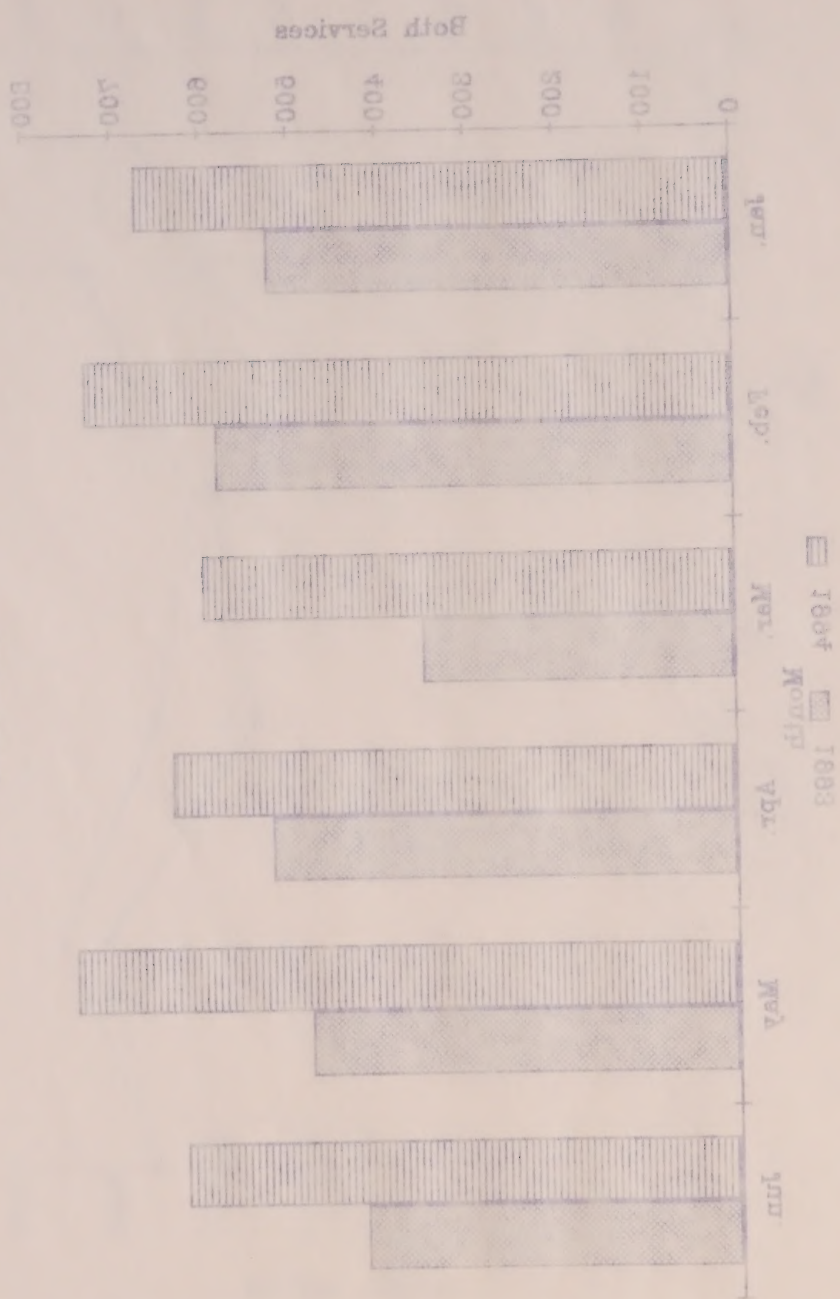
Attendance/Finances Mid-Year Report-1934



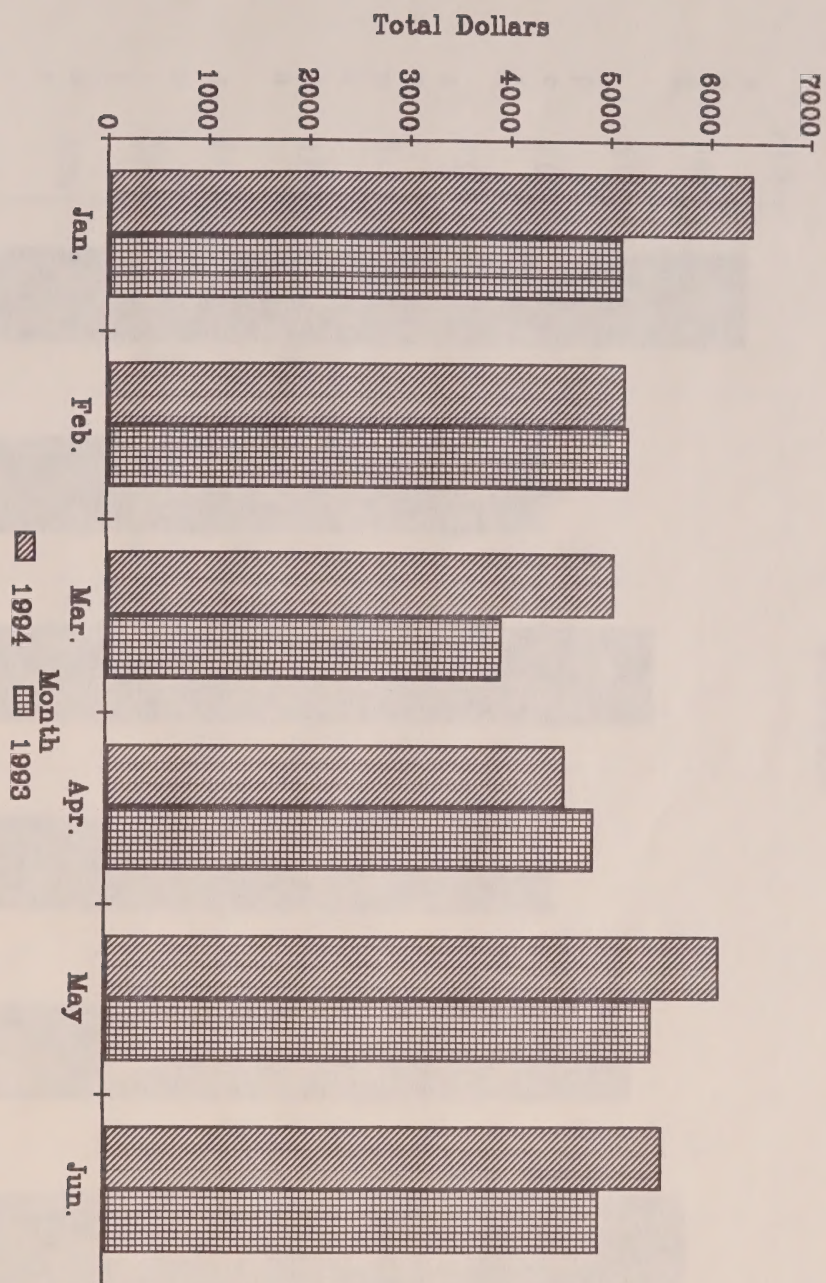
Mid-Year Report Attendance



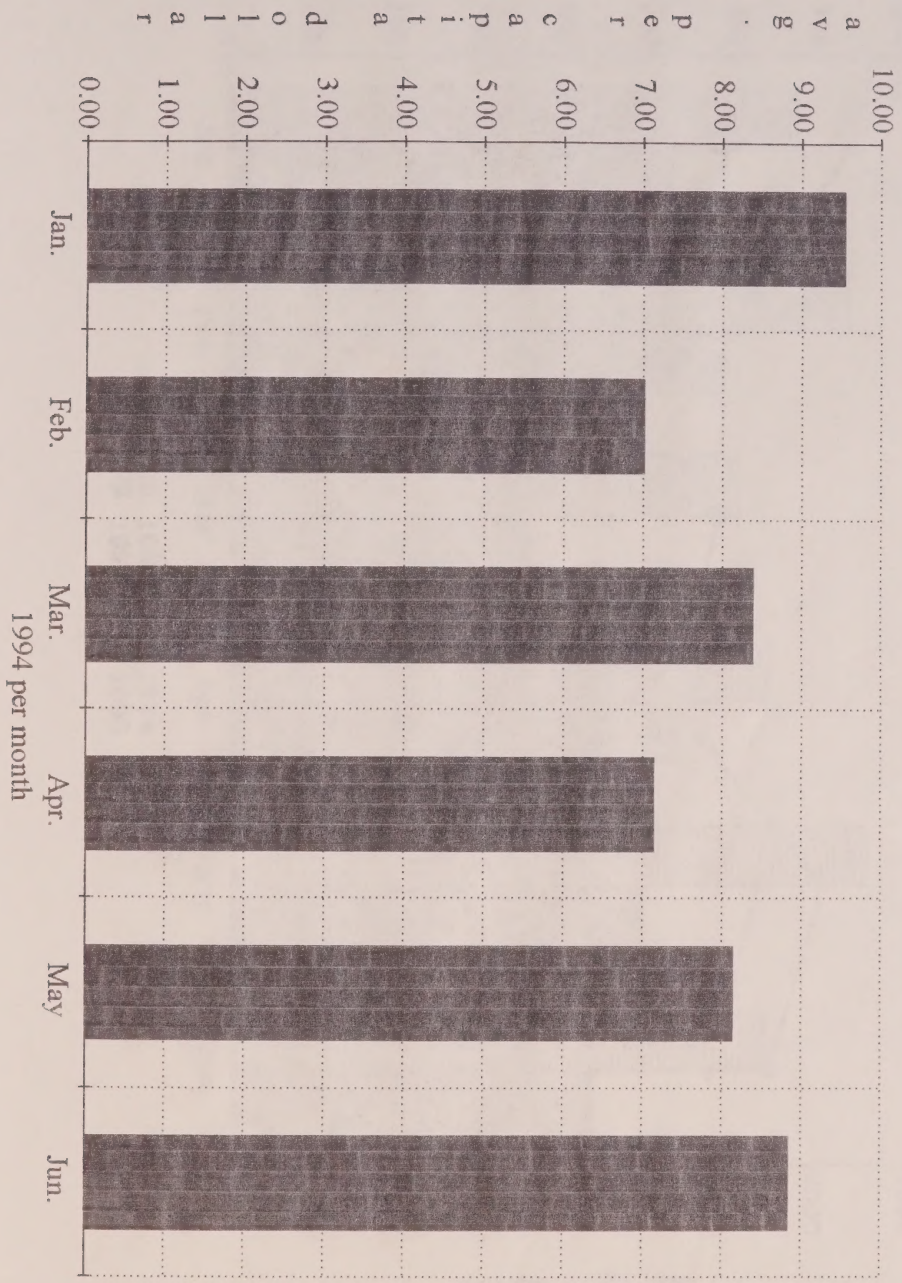
Attendance Mid-Year Report



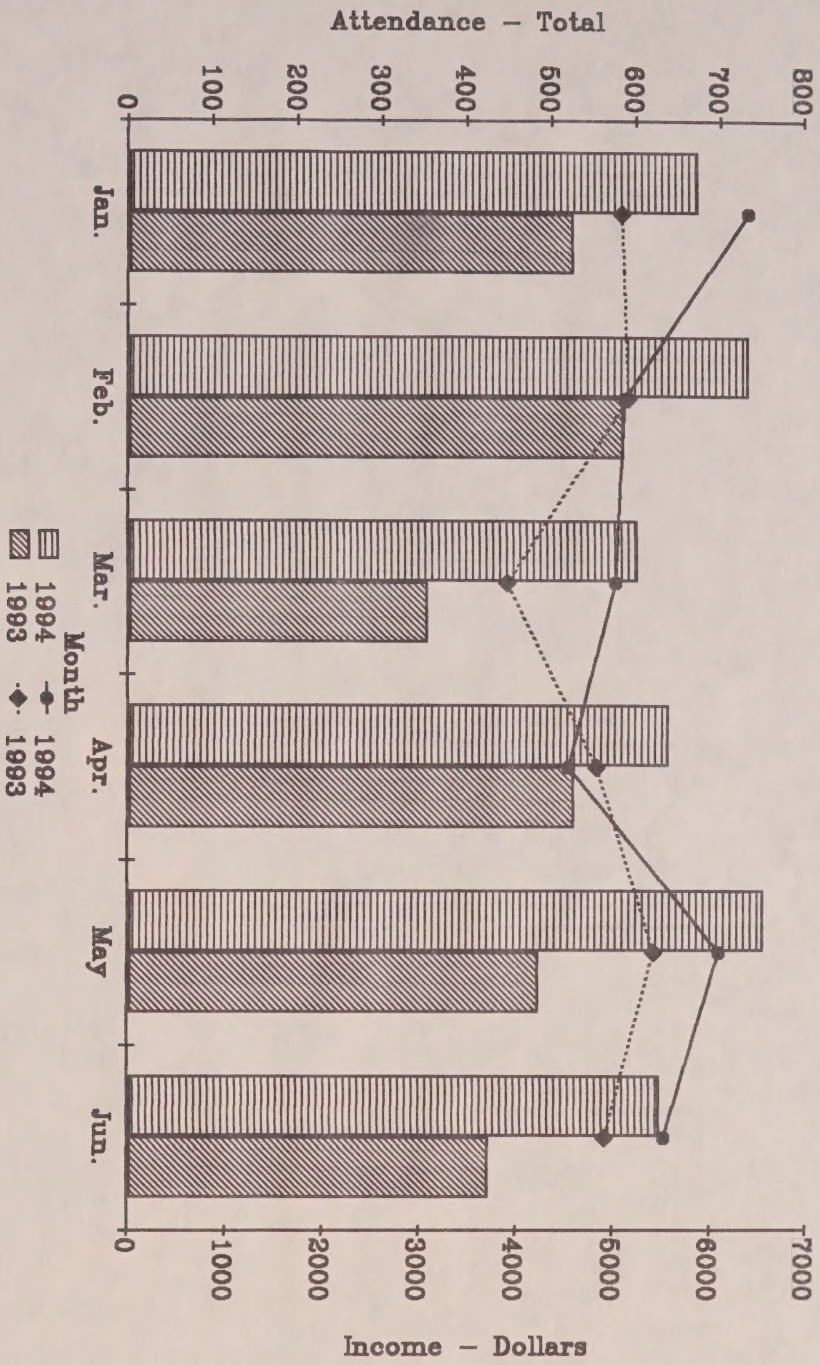
Mid-Year Report General Income



Average Giving
per attendee



Mid-Year Report Attendance/Finances



Attendance - Total Mid-Year Report

